

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1-30 (cancelled)

31. (currently amended) Apparatus for heat sealing a pack comprising a first pack member including formed of sheet of material including a substantially planar part with a plurality of formations, formations depending therefrom each providing an open-topped receptacle, and a substantially planar second pack member for sealing to the first pack member to close and seal the receptacles, the apparatus including:

a base and comprising a support member including a substantially planar part for supporting the substantially planar part of the sheet material of the first pack member and a plurality of pockets in the planar part of the support member for receiving the formations of the sheet material of the first pack member;

a lid hinged to the base and including a substantially planar contact face for sandwiching contacting the substantially planar second pack member to sandwich the first and second pack members therebetween and between the base and the lid;

heating means adapted to heat only selected areas of contact between the first and second pack members to seal the first and second pack members together, together in the selected areas to thereby closing and sealing close and seal the receptacles in the first pack member;

wherein the heating means comprises a heating element attached to a surface of the substantially planar part of the support member of the base or to a surface of the substantially planar contact face of the lid, and wherein the heating element traces a path over the surface of the substantially planar part or over the surface of the substantially planar contact face such that it substantially encircles each of the plurality of pockets in the planar part of the support member of the base when the base and the lid are hinged together to thereby provide heating in the selected areas of contact between the first and second pack members.

32-36 (canceled)

37. (currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 31 wherein the lid of the apparatus is ~~movably attached~~ hinged to the base such that it may be moved between an open and a closed position and in the open position, the lid is spaced from the base such that the first pack member may be placed onto the base.

38. (currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 37 wherein in the closed position the lid and the base may sandwich first and second pack members therebetween, the second pack member contacting the upper face of the first pack member, thus defining the contact area between the first and second pack members.

39-40 (canceled)

41. (currently amended) Apparatus according to ~~claim 40~~ claim 38 wherein the apparatus includes catch means for holding the lid and the base firmly together in the closed position to sandwich the first and second pack members firmly therebetween.

42-45 (canceled)

46. (currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 31 wherein the heating means is adapted to heat the selected contact areas to a temperature of at least 100°C ~~but is adapted to provide substantially no heating of air in the receptacles.~~

47. (currently amended) Apparatus according to ~~claim 31~~ claim 37 wherein the apparatus includes a switch for closing to cause current to flow through the heating means, the switch closing automatically when the lid is brought into its closed position.

48. (currently amended) Apparatus according to ~~claim 31~~
claim 47 wherein the apparatus includes a controller for
controlling the flow of current in dependence on a temperature
feedback signal.

49-57 (canceled)

58. (new) Apparatus according to claim 31, wherein the heating means comprises a first heating element attached to a surface of the substantially planar part of the support member of the base and a second heating element attached to a surface of the substantially planar contact face of the lid, and wherein the first heating element traces a path over the surface of the substantially planar part such that it substantially encircles each of the plurality of pockets and the second heating element traces a path over the surface of the substantially planar contact face such that it substantially encircles each of the plurality of pockets.

59. (new) Apparatus for heat sealing a pack comprising a first pack member formed of sheet of material including a substantially planar part with a plurality of formations depending therefrom each providing an open-topped receptacle, and a substantially planar second pack member for sealing to the first pack member to close and seal the receptacles, the apparatus including:

a base comprising a support member including a substantially planar part for supporting the substantially planar part of the sheet material of the first pack member and a plurality of pockets in the planar part of the support member for receiving the formations of the sheet material of the first pack member;

a lid hinged to the base and including a substantially planar contact face for contacting the substantially planar second pack member to sandwich the first and second pack members between the base and the lid;

heating means adapted to heat only selected areas of contact between the first and second pack members to seal the first and second pack members together in the selected areas to thereby close and seal the receptacles in the first pack member;

wherein the heating means comprises a heating element encased in silicone rubber and attached to a surface of the substantially planar part of the support member of the base or to a surface of the substantially planar contact face of the lid, and wherein the heating element traces a path over the surface of the substantially planar part or over the surface of the substantially planar contact face such that it substantially encircles each of the plurality of pockets in the planar part of the support member of the base when the base and the lid are hinged together to thereby provide heating in the selected areas of contact between the first and second pack members.

60. (new) Apparatus for heat sealing a pack comprising a first pack member formed of sheet of material including a substantially planar part with a plurality of formations depending therefrom each providing an open-topped receptacle, and a substantially planar second pack member for sealing to the first pack member to close and seal the receptacles, the apparatus including:

a base comprising a support member including a substantially planar part for supporting the substantially planar part of the sheet material of the first pack member and a plurality of pockets in the planar part of the support member for receiving the formations of the sheet material of the first pack member;

a lid hinged to the base and including a substantially planar contact face for contacting the substantially planar second pack member to sandwich the first and second pack members between the base and the lid;

heating means adapted to heat only selected areas of contact between the first and second pack members to seal the first and

second pack members together in the selected areas to thereby close and seal the receptacles in the first pack member;

wherein the heating means comprises a heating element formed from etched foil encased in silicone rubber and attached to a surface of the substantially planar part of the support member of the base or to a surface of the substantially planar contact face of the lid, and wherein the heating element traces a path over the surface of the substantially planar part or over the surface of the substantially planar contact face such that it substantially encircles each of the plurality of pockets in the planar part of the support member of the base when the base and the lid are hinged together to thereby provide heating in the selected areas of contact between the first and second pack members.